

7 February 1983

Unclassified Summary of Public Positions on INF

Italian media gave the Vice President an enthusiastic welcome over the weekend. Meanwhile, the Thatcher government has denied a report that it has dropped its INF public relations effort. [redacted]

STAT

UK

The Observer yesterday reported that the Thatcher government had decided to abandon its public relations campaign on INF because London is "seriously embarrassed" by opposition charges that public funds would be used to finance the project. Government spokesmen have denied that the campaign has been cancelled. Reuter notes it is The Observer that, a week ago, first aired the story that British government officials are considering using a well-known advertising firm to help organize the campaign. [redacted]

STAT

Italy

Media coverage of the Vice President's arrival in Rome was extensive and positive in tone. Among the conservative press, Il Tempo noted that Italy would go ahead with deployment if no "fair agreement" is reached in Geneva, and Il Popolo observed that "actually Bush doesn't need to convince anyone in Italy." The centrist Corriere Della Sera said that the Bush mission has "created an atmosphere that's closing the gap between America and its Allies," but noted that, as a result, "Bush has become more the bearer of European requests and contradictions than the messenger of a definite American policy." Among leftist papers, La Repubblica thought that the Vice President might ask the Pope to help convince US bishops to tone down their opposition to nuclear weapons; the Socialist organ Avanti! surmised that Bush was "giving the impression that the US is willing to make some gesture in a few weeks," while the PCI paper l'Unita suggested that the Vice President "acquaint himself with the great popular opposition" to INF. [redacted]

STAT

USSR

In an editorial today, Pravda again attacks the zero option and US arguments for NATO's deployment of INF. TASS on Saturday disseminated a Pravda commentary entitled "An Unsuccessful Maneuver"; it called the Vice President's trip a "broad-based propaganda act" that is "doomed to failure." The piece noted that Bush had come Europe with "empty hands" and that the US summit invitation was only a "propagandistic intrigue relying on sensation" that soon "burst like a soap bubble." [redacted]

STAT

Warsaw Pact

East European media over the past week have continued to follow the Soviet lead in covering the Vice President's trip. Commentators have dismissed the US summit proposal as essentially a restatement of the zero option. Only the Hungarian press has expressed some hope that the US offer could result in an eventual summit. [redacted]

STAT

EUR M 83-10056